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uable as this of Dr Webster, it would be some compensation, and the only one which they can make, for the wrong they do their country by their absence. It will not, we hope, be thought, that however valuable this work may be on account of its own intrinsic worth, it is still of but little interest to us, in respect of the country, which it describes; and it certainly will not, by those who recollect that St Michael is an island with which we have considerable trade, from which we receive one of our choicest luxuries, and to which our invalids resort to find a balmier air and a milder sky than can be had in our climate during winter. We leave it, with many thanks to the writer for the entertainment and instruction it has afforded us.

ART. V.—*Dissertations on the importance and the best method of studying the Original Languages of the Bible, by Jahn and others, translated from the originals and accompanied with notes, by M. Stuart, Associate Professor of Sacred Literature in the Theological Seminary at Andover.* 8vo. Andover. 1821.

WE can say of the present work, as of the Hebrew Grammar, noticed in our last number, that it bodes well to the cause of oriental learning, not only in the Theological Seminary, with which its author is connected, but, as we hope, in other similar institutions in our country. The prominent object of this publication is to urge the necessity of studying the original languages of the bible, especially the Hebrew and its related dialects, to point out the best method of studying them, and, if we look at the tendency of some of the notes, appended to it, we may add, to excite the attention of the public to the important subject of a well educated and faithful ministry. These are objects, we are sure, which are calculated to interest the feelings both of the scholar and the christian; and which necessarily involve the literary respectability and intellectual progress, as well as the religious well-being of the community. The dissertations, which are embodied in the publication, appear in three parts, and are followed by the notes, just now alluded to, from the spirited pen of the translator.

The principal author of part first, as we are informed in the preface, is Dr J. Jahn, an archbishop in the catholic church

at Vienna, and formerly professor in the university there of the oriental languages, biblical archæology, higher criticism, and doctrinal theology.

The second part, which is short and occupied chiefly with the proper mode of studying the Hebrew, is translated from the preface to the small Hebrew Grammar of Gesenius, who is professor at the university at Hallé, and author of a valuable Hebrew lexicon, and many other philological works.

The third part is an extract from the dissertation, prefixed to the *Εκλογαί Ιστορικαί* of Wytttenbach, formerly professor of Greek at Leyden, and is introduced to enforce the opinion and the recommendations of Jahn, in regard to the *repetition* of the lessons, which the student has taken, until he becomes able not only to construe them with ease, but to feel in his own bosom the inspiration and the power with which they were originally written.

Among the various subjects introduced into this publication, the topic, which chiefly occupies the dissertation of Jahn, is the study of the Hebrew. The arguments, which he uses, to show the importance of a knowledge of the Hebrew, are such, we believe, as cannot be readily overthrown; and were we certain that they would be read by all who peruse these pages, we should be quite willing to leave the subject, without any additional observations, in the hands of so able an arbiter. But knowing the probability that this will not be the case, and being in some degree acquainted with the state of sacred literature in our country, we deem it proper to give our own testimony on the point, and to aid the exertions of professor Stuart, to promote among us a more creditable knowledge of the original languages of the bible. 'The holy bible,' says Jahn, 'is the principal source of theology; the fountain, from which, in a special manner, all science of religion is drawn; the foundation, on which its doctrines are built.' If this be the case, it is altogether reasonable to expect from those, who set themselves up as teachers in religion, that they should be minutely acquainted both with its character and the instructions it communicates. An inquiry then arises, whether a man can obtain such a thorough knowledge of the bible, as to authorize him to assume the insignia and perform the sacred duties of a public religious instructor, without an acquaintance with the languages in which it was originally written. Those, who maintain the affirmative of this question, will perhaps tell us,

that a *translation* is an adequate substitute for the original, and that there is no absolute need either of Greek or Hebrew, provided a man can read his mother tongue.

We are inclined to admit the accuracy of professor Stuart's assertion, who maintains, in one of his notes, that the worst translation which was ever made of the scriptures, contains all that is *essential* to religion, either as it respects doctrine or practice. Some translations, he observes, have added things to the scriptures which religion does not require, and some have made one part of the bible to gainsay another ; but the worst translation never removed nor wholly obscured the great and leading principles of revealed religion. This is readily admitted, and we may add too in regard to the English translation in particular, that in the main it is a good one, that it is extremely creditable to the age in which it was made, and would probably be a real sufferer, if it were trusted in the hands of modern English divines for the purpose of being amended.

But, although it may be considered by some a gratuitous assertion on our part, we appeal to the experience of every real scholar in our behalf, when we say, that the best translation existing, whether of the classics or the Bible, fails in a vast number of instances of conveying the precise shape and the true spirit of the original. This results necessarily from the imperfection of language, and is more especially true in regard to versions made from the Hebrew and Chaldaic, in which the Old Testament is written, because these languages differ so widely in many important respects from those of Europe.

We have good translations in English of many of the classics, but certainly the man would gain no credit to himself, who should seriously maintain his thorough acquaintance with the style, the general spirit, and the peculiarities of Homer, from merely having read him in the Iliad and Odyssey of Pope, or even in the more literal version of Cowper. It is not surprising, then, that many parts of our common version, for instance, the books of Job and Isaiah, should convey an imperfect notion of the splendid beauties of their originals. Nor can an adequate acquaintance with those beauties, nor indeed in all cases with the grammatical sense, be obtained even by the additional aid of a commentary.

That the inadequacy of translations cannot be compensated by the aid of a *practical* or *religious* commentary merely is

sufficiently clear; and a critical and exegetical one, such as Rosenmüller's on the Old, and Kuinoel's on the New Testament, so far from lending the desired assistance, we venture to say, can neither be fully understood nor estimated without a previous knowledge to some extent of the originals themselves. Provided, moreover, they *could* be understood, the person who trusts to them wholly, without being able to investigate for himself, cannot be sure a single moment that he is not the dupe of the commentator, or that the commentator is not himself deceived.

And while in regard to *public* teachers of religion, we maintain that a suitable knowledge of the Bible cannot be acquired from translations merely, and commentaries, we may add, as a further inducement for the acquisition of such knowledge, that without it a person will be unable, not only to answer those, who when disputed appeal to the originals, but will be equally unable to defend with any hope of success the genuineness of the sacred writings. If any one, for instance, should undertake to show that the gospel of Luke or the prophecies of Isaiah were written at the time and in the circumstances, in which they profess to have been, without a knowledge of those peculiarities of style, which can be learnt only by an acquaintance with the originals, he would certainly show himself to have undertaken a task altogether above his ability. We would gladly extend our remarks on this point, but we can only say at present, we hope, the clerical associations and presbyteries of our country will not, by lending the sanction of their authority, encourage young men to go forth in the high character of heralds of the cross, without that thorough and fundamental knowledge of the Bible, for which Jahn and his translator so strenuously and reasonably contend. If they are too dull to learn, it is much the wisest to conclude, that the Deity never intended them for his ambassadors, and if too indolent, there is no hazard in considering it as certain that he wants no such degenerate workmen in his vineyard. It is not merely the study of the Hebrew, which is urged upon us in these dissertations; we are invited likewise to the study of its related dialects, and on this point also we should do injustice to our feelings, were we not to express our opinions, however concisely. The Hebrew is a dialect of an ancient language, which was spoken originally in Palestine, Syria, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Æthiopia, and Babylon. Although the dialects of this

widely diffused and ancient language are nearly related to each other, and show themselves at first glance to be sisters of the same family, they may conveniently be divided into three principal classes. The first is the *Aramæan*, so called from the Hebrew word **אַרַם**, the biblical name for Syria and the adjacent countries, which divided itself again into the provincial dialects, denominated the east and west *Aramæan*, or *Chaldaic* and *Syriac*. The second class comprehends the *Canaanitish*, or *Hebrew*, and the *Phœnician*, of which last, however, there are but very few remains. The third embraces the *Arabic* and *Æthiopic*. The *Samaritan* appears to be a mixture of the *Hebrew* and *Aramæan*. By *Jerome* and others of the fathers these dialects were denominated *Oriental*, but the term appearing to be too general, *Eichhorn* has introduced another, and chooses to denominate them the *Shemitish*. To the latter term, however, as well as the former, there is an objection, inasmuch as the *Canaanites* and *Æthiopians* were descendants of *Ham*, instead of *Shem*. But as it is of no essential consequence which term we use, provided we understand what is meant by it, we shall content ourselves for the present with applying to the dialects, which have been mentioned, indifferently either of the terms, *Shemitish* or *Oriental*. The acquisition of these dialects is quite easy to one, as will readily be imagined, who is well grounded in the *Hebrew*, and, although a man may become a respectable and highly useful minister without them, a knowledge of them, especially of the *Aramæan* and *Arabic*, is very desirable. At least, those who deny the utility of such knowledge would do well to remember that a portion of the *Old Testament*, and that not a very small one, is written in the dialect of *Aram*, and that we are bound to study this dialect for the same cause, although the obligation is of less urgency, that we are bound to study the *Hebrew* or the *Greek* of the *New Testament*.

The parts of the *Old Testament* written in *Chaldee* are *Daniel*, from the fourth verse of the second, to the commencement of the eighth chapter; and *Ezra*, from the eighth verse of the fourth, to the twenty seventh of the seventh chapter. It ought to be remembered also, that this dialect is very similar to the *Hebrew*, both in the construction of its sentences and the signification of its words, as might be expected from its being one of the same kindred. Hence we are often enabled by its assistance to illustrate the meaning of an obscure word,

and to explain a difficult construction. The truth of this assertion, in respect to the Chaldee, and equally so in regard to the Arabic and Syriac, will be sufficiently clear by turning to any able exegetical commentary on the Bible. And this is so easily done, that we do not deem it necessary to introduce instances here in proof of it. A reference to the cognate dialects of the Hebrew is found particularly necessary and useful in the explanation of those difficult words which occur but once in the Hebrew, and are technically denominated *Ἀπαξ λεγόμενα*. There are many pure Aramæan words found scattered in different parts of Job, Ecclesiastes, and other books of the Old Testament, and Aramæan forms, both of verbs and nouns, are not unfrequent. The aid, which the cognate dialects of the Hebrew afford in the interpretation of the Bible, is not limited to the Old Testament; they throw light also on a number of obscure passages in the New. 'Several expressions of the New Testament,' says J. D. Michaelis in his introduction to it, 'receive great light from the Arabic. I will not call such passages Arabisms, though many of the sermons of Christ were held on the eastern or Arabian side of the Jordan, where John the Baptist chiefly resided, and many other opportunities might have introduced Arabic expressions into the language of Palestine. The oriental languages have a striking affinity with each other; but as we know more of the Arabic, than of either Hebrew, Chaldee, or Syriac, it is not surprising that many passages of the New Testament can be explained from that language alone.' The Chaldee Targums, so called from the Chaldee word *תרגום*, which signifies Interpretation or Paraphrase, particularly those of Onkelos and Jonathan, have been and always will be held in estimation by the theologian, for the testimony which they afford to the genuineness of the present Hebrew text, and for the helps they offer for the better understanding both of the Old and New Testament. They are spoken of by Bishop Walton, whose merits, as an oriental scholar, no one will dispute, in the following favorable terms, selected from his Prolegomena. 'Primo, textui Hebræo testimonium ferunt, ejusque integritatem confirmant. Secundo, in multis locis articulos fidei Christianæ confirmant, et contra Judæos fortissima argumenta suppeditant. Tertio, in textibus difficilibus, locis obscuris, et vocabulis inusitatis multum lucis afferunt. Dum ritus, consuetudines, historias, vocabulorum significationem genuinam, sensumque

literalem explicant, quæ ipsis ex majorum traditione accepta, melius quam nobis nota erant.' The Phœnician, one of the Shemitish dialects, has become, as before remarked, nearly extinct. The history of the Samaritans is interesting on account of their connexion with the Jews, being of a like origin and a kindred religion; but the treasures of their language are so small, that the acquisition of it may be properly superseded by other studies of more prominent and real importance. Perhaps the same may be said with equal justice of the Æthiopic, especially as it is so intimately connected with the Arabic, that a knowledge of the latter will afford nearly all the aid, which could be derived from a combined acquaintance with both. The Samaritan Pentateuch, which was unknown in Europe till the seventeenth century, although quoted by the Fathers, was at length procured from the east by archbishop Usher, and was printed by Morinus in 1632 from a copy deposited in the oratory of St Honoré. It at first, as might be expected, excited much curiosity, but, although ancient, its authority and value are not wisely placed above, nor put in competition with the worth of the Hebrew text. The Samaritan Pentateuch, together with the Psalms, Song of Solomon, and New Testament, in Æthiopic, may be found in Walton's Polyglott.

From these remarks, it will be easy to infer our opinion respecting the study of the cognate dialects of the Hebrew. To a professed biblical critic, one who makes the interpretation of the Bible his whole study, they are all of them important, but we should find no fault with the ordinary theologian, if he should exercise the wisdom and summon up the resolution to become acquainted merely with the Aramæan and the Arabic.

These, the Arabic and the Aramæan, which includes the Chaldee and Syriac, we trust will never be neglected by our young men, (those, we mean, who are preparing for the pulpit,) from principle, although we fear they will often be neglected from necessity. The Arabic in particular is not a language, like the others, which was living, but is dead, whose great men flourished, but are no more, whose works existed, but have perished. It is a living language, is very extensively spoken, and is worthy of peculiar attention. A vast number of Arabian writers flourished during that dark period, when Europe was enveloped in ignorance. Animated with
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the true literary ardor, 'they seized and transmitted the torch of science,' when, if it had been left to other hands, it would have fallen and been extinguished. Under the patronage of Almamun, who was a great lover of learning, they translated the best Greek authors, and they did not want among themselves for men, who excelled in history, in poetry, in mathematics, and medicine. With how much sweetness and simplicity they could touch the lyre of the muses is known to many of our readers from the 'Specimens of Arabian Poetry,' which Professor Carlyle presented to the English public. In justice to the fine taste and poetical feeling, as well as the scholarship of their amiable translator, we cannot forbear copying one of these specimens. It is written by Ben Yousef, who for many years acted as vizier to Abou Nasser, sultan of Diarbeker. He was passionately devoted to literature, notwithstanding his high station in political life, and composed the following stanzas, as in his travels he passed through the beautiful valley of Bozáa :

'The intertwining boughs for thee
Have wove, sweet dell, a verdant vest,
And thou in turn shall give to me,
A verdant couch upon thy breast.

To shield me from day's fervid glare
Thine oaks their fostering arms extend,
As anxious o'er her infant care
I've seen a watchful mother bend.

A brighter cup, a sweeter draught,
I gather from that rill of thine,
Than maddening drunkards ever quaffed,
Than all the treasures of the vine.

So smooth the pebbles on its shore,
That not a maid can thither stray,
But counts her strings of jewels o'er,
And thinks the pearls have slipped away.'

Princes were poets, and in many instances the sons of song were treated like princes. If our readers wish to be further informed on the subject of the Arabic and the other related dialects, to understand the treasures they contain and their connexion with biblical criticism, we refer them to the Dissertations before us, particularly that of Jahn, and note G of Professor Stuart. Such works also, as Sismondi's *Literature of the South of Europe*, Gesenius' *Geschichte der Hebräischen Sprache und Schrift*, Eichhorn's *Einleitung*, and Walton's *Prolegomena* are calculated to give some true idea both of its nature and importance.

Another topic, introduced into the Dissertations, relates to the best mode of studying languages. Many of the remarks made by Gesenius, and the other authors of these Dissertations, on this point, are grounded in the nature of the human mind, are confirmed by their own experience in teaching, and are worthy the attention of the scholar, whatever his country and wherever he may be educated. It is a grand point in the acquisition of languages, while the faculties are kept in patient and vigorous exercise, not to burden them with too many dry details, and especially not to overload and constrain the memory. In the study of the Hebrew, after a person has become fundamentally acquainted with the theory of the vowels, and made himself master of the pronouns, verbs, and declensions, he ought not to be denied the pleasure of attempting to construe, and should endeavour to connect the theory and the practice, the grammar and the interpretation. ‘Grammar,’ says Jahn, ‘is merely the medium of learning the languages with more facility, but the medium is not to be so commuted for the ultimate end, that more pains should be bestowed on the former than on the latter.’ The Hebrew syntax, though not deficient in general principles, exhibits a multitude of peculiarities and exceptions. To commit to memory the whole of it, together with all the multiplied rules and exceptions, which appear in other parts of the grammar in the first instance, is unadvisable. They had better be learned by a recurrence to them, as occasion may require, after the student has begun to construe; a recurrence which will be pleasing, if he has imbibed the spirit of oriental literature. Let the student, after he has studied the whole or a part of a book, pursue the method of Wytenbach, peruse it again carefully, and repeat the perusal, till he has trodden familiarly the crooked path of its anomalies, and its beauties begin to open more fully upon his mind.

ART. VI.—*Memoirs of Algernon Sydney, by George Wilson Meadley, with an Appendix.* 8vo, London, 1813.

No portion of English history presents stronger claims to attention than the last sixty years of the seventeenth century, a period in which that nation made the most rapid advances in civil and religious freedom. It is impossible to